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SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS: LAWYERS MEET WITH AN UPBEAT CHEN
GUANGCHENG

REF: BEIJING 23167

Classified By: Classified by Political Internal Unit Chief Susan
Thornton. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary. Members of activist Chen Guangcheng's legal defense team traveled to Shandong Province November 3 to visit Chen following the Linyi Intermediate Court's decision ordering a new trial in his case. Chen, who remains in prison but appeared strong and in good spirits, avowed the importance of continuing rights protection work in China, according to lead attorney Li Jingsong. The judge who presided at Chen's August 28 trial reportedly encouraged Chen, telling him that the "real facts" of his case will "become known," and prison guards refused a warden's instruction to mistreat Chen. A date for Chen's retrial has not been set, but it will likely be held within the next few weeks. End summary.

¶2. (C) Rights advocate Hu Jia told poloff November 4 that three members of Chen Guangcheng's legal team, Li Jingsong, Li Subin and Huang Zhengrong, traveled from Beijing to Yanan County on November 3 to visit Chen in the wake of the Linyi Intermediate Court's October 30 decision ordering a new trial (reftel). Following the lawyers' arrival in Shandong Province on November 3, officials at Yanan County detention facility permitted Li Jingsong to meet with Chen for about 50 minutes. Li reported that this is the first time Chen has been allowed to meet with lawyers outside the presence of police officials. Chen's health and spirits are excellent, Li said, noting that he had requested that prison authorities provide a special meal, long-life noodles, for Chen on his November 12 birthday.

¶3. (C) Chen expressed gratitude for the widespread support his case has received and asked Li to convey to supporters his firm intention to continue his rights protection work. Chen told Li that the most important aspect of rights protection work lies in implementing the action or function of law, and that the worst possible outcome would be for people to lose hope in the law or sit passively in the face of challenges. Chen told Li that he continues his efforts to promote rights protection even at the detention facility, where he has assisted with seven or eight rights-protection cases.

¶4. (C) Li said Chen remains confident in Chinese society and the force of justice within it, based on his experience with individuals administering China's criminal justice system in his case. Chen reportedly told Li that the judge who presided at his August 28 trial, Wang Hui, encouraged Chen not to "regard

everyone as bad" because the "real facts" in Chen's case will "eventually become known." Based on this, Li believes the judge understands that the trial was unjust. In addition, Chen told Li he has dealt directly with more than ten policemen and that, of these, only two or three were devoid of conscience or a sense of justice. Chen said that when a prison warden told guards to mistreat him in late July, subordinate guards refused to do so.

¶5. (C) A date for Chen's retrial has not been set, but Hu said it should take place within the next few weeks. In the meantime, Chen's lawyers have returned to Beijing. Chen supporters have launched a public letter-writing campaign to encourage Shandong Province officials to enforce the law in Chen's case, find Chen innocent and free him.
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